



## **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

### **Rural Business-Cooperative Service**

**[DOCKET#: RBS-21-BUSINESS-0035]**

### **Notice of Solicitation of Applications for Inviting Applications for the Intermediary Relending Program for Fiscal Year 2022**

**AGENCY:** Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA Rural Development.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This Notice is to invite applications under the Intermediary Relending Program (IRP) for fiscal year (FY) 2022, subject to availability of funding. This Notice is being issued in order to allow applicants enough time to leverage financing, prepare and submit their applications, and give the Agency time to process program applications within FY 2022. Successful applications will be selected by the Agency for funding and subsequently awarded to the extent that funding may ultimately be made available through appropriations. An announcement on the Website at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/newsroom/notices-solicitation-applications-nosas> will identify the amount received in the appropriations. The Agency advises that all interested parties bear the financial burden of preparing and submitting an application in response to the notice whether or not funding is appropriated for this Program in FY 2022.

**DATES:** The deadlines for completed applications to be received in the USDA Rural Development State Office for quarterly funding competitions is no later than 4:30 p.m. (local time) on: Second Quarter- December 31, 2021, Third Quarter- March 31, 2022, and Fourth Quarter- June 30, 2022.

**ADDRESSES:** Applications must be submitted to the USDA Rural Development State Office for the state where the applicant is located. Applications may be submitted in paper or electronic format to the appropriate Rural Development State Office and must be received by 4:30 p.m. local time on the deadline date(s) to compete for available funds in the fiscal quarter. Applicants are encouraged to contact their respective Rural Development State Office for an email contact to submit an electronic application prior to the submission deadline date(s). A list of the USDA Rural Development State Office contacts can be found at: [State Offices | Rural Development \(usda.gov\)](#)

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Lori Pittman, [lori.pittman1@usda.gov](mailto:lori.pittman1@usda.gov), Program Management Division, Business Programs, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, MS 3226, Room 5160-S, Washington, D.C. 20250-3226, or call (202) 720-1400. For further information on this notice, please contact the USDA Rural Development State Office in the State in which the applicant's headquarters is located. A list of Rural Development State Office contacts is provided at the following link: [State Offices | Rural Development \(usda.gov\)](#)

### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**

The Agency encourages applicants to consider projects that will advance the following key priorities (more details available at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/priority-points>):

- Assisting rural communities recover economically from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly disadvantaged communities;
- Ensuring all rural residents have equitable access to Rural Development (RD) programs and benefits from RD funded projects; and

- Reducing climate pollution and increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change through economic support to rural communities.

## **Overview**

*Solicitation Opportunity Type:* Intermediary Relending Program.

*Announcement Type:* Solicitation of Applications for FY 2022 loan funds.

*Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:* 10.767.

*Dates:* Applications are accepted on a continuous basis and compete for available funds on a quarterly basis. Applications received in the USDA Rural Development State Office no later than 4:30 p.m. (local time) on: Second Quarter- December 31, 2021, Third Quarter- March 31, 2022 and Fourth Quarter- June 30, 2022, will compete for available funds in the fiscal quarter.

### *Set-Aside Funding Dates:*

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 authorized set-aside funding to projects and intermediaries serving Federally-Recognized Native American Tribes, and for Mississippi Delta Region Counties (as determined in accordance with Public Law 100-460). Eligible applicants for the set-aside funds, if such funds are appropriated, must demonstrate that at least 75 percent of the benefits of an approved loan in this program will assist ultimate recipients in the designated areas. Applications for set-aside funds must be submitted to the Rural Development State Office where the project is located by 4:30 p.m. (local time) on the following deadline dates. The completed application deadline for the Federally Recognized Native American Tribes and Mississippi Delta Region Counties projects is May 31, 2022. Funds may also be appropriated for projects located in Rural Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Communities/Rural Economic Area Partnership areas. Completed applications for these projects subject to available funding,

must be submitted by July 15, 2022.

## **A. Program Description**

1. Purpose of the Program. The purpose of the program is to provide direct loans to intermediaries that establish revolving loan programs for the purpose of providing loans to ultimate recipients for business purposes and community development in a rural area as defined in 7 CFR § 4274.302. All applicable program requirements in their entirety can be found at 7 CFR Part 4274, subpart D.

2. Statutory Authority. This program is authorized under Section 310H of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1936b) and is administered through regulations at 7 CFR part 4274, subpart D.

3. Definition of Terms. The definitions applicable to this notice are published at 7 CFR 4274.302.

4. Application Awards. The Agency will review, evaluate and score applications received in response to this notice based on the provisions found in 7 CFR § 4274.341.

## **B. Federal Award Information**

*Type of Award:* Loan

*Fiscal Year Funds:* FY 2022

*Available Funds:* Funding for the IRP program in FY 2022 is anticipated with the amount of any available funds to be determined in an Appropriations Act for FY 2022.

*Maximum Award:* The Agency anticipates a maximum award of \$1 Million for eligible Intermediaries submitting a loan request.

*Anticipated Award Dates - Regular Funding:* Second Quarter- February 28, 2022, Third Quarter- May 31, 2022, Fourth Quarter- August 31, 2022.

*Anticipated Award Date – Federally Recognized Native American Tribes and Mississippi Delta Region Counties Funding: June 15, 2022.*

*Anticipated Award Date - Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities/Rural Economic Area Partnership Funding: August 1, 2022.*

*Renewal or Supplemental Awards: None.*

**C. Eligibility Information**

*1. Eligible Applicants.*

IRP loans may be made to a private non-profit corporation, a public agency, an Indian Tribe, or a cooperative entity, identified as eligible borrowers in accordance with 7 CFR 4274.310.

*2. Cost Share or Matching.*

Applicants will receive points in compliance with 7 CFR 4274.341(b) if a cash contribution at a minimum of five percent of the loan amount is contributed to the IRP revolving loan fund at the time of application. An application will score higher with a higher cash contribution percentage to the application amount. The IRP revolving fund share of the eligible project cost of an ultimate recipient's project shall not exceed 75 percent of the total cost of the ultimate recipient's project for which the loan is being made, in accordance with 7 CFR 4274.352.

*3. Discretionary Points*

The Administrator may assign up to 35 discretionary points to an application when under their approval authority. Assignment of discretionary points must include a written justification. Permissible justifications are geographic distribution of funds, special Secretary of Agriculture initiatives such as Priority Communities, or a state's strategic

goals. The number of points to be awarded will be determined by the impact of the project on the stated initiative. Discretionary points may only be assigned to initial grants. However, in the case where two Projects have the same score, the State Director may add one point to the Project that best fits the State's strategic plan regardless of whether the Project is an initial or subsequent grant. The following are examples of special Secretary of Agriculture initiatives that can support obtaining discretionary points.

(i) COVID-19 Recovery. Applicant may receive priority points if the project is located in or serving one of the top 10% of counties or county equivalents based upon county risk score in the United States. The website, <https://www.rd.usda.gov/priority-points>, has the data to confirm if your location qualifies or not.

(ii) Equity. Applicant may receive priority points if the project is located in or serving a community with score 0.75 or above on the CDC Social Vulnerability Index. The website, <https://www.rd.usda.gov/priority-points>, has the data to confirm if your location qualifies or not.

(iii) Climate Impact. Applicants may receive points if the project is located in or serving coal, oil and gas, and power plant communities whose economic well-being ranks in the most distressed tier of the Distressed Communities Index. The website, <https://www.rd.usda.gov/priority-points>, has the data to confirm if your location qualifies or not. Or, applicants may receive points by demonstrating how proposed climate-impact projects improve the livelihoods of community residents and meet pollution mitigation or clean energy goals.

#### 4. *Other.*

Applications will only be accepted from eligible intermediaries that will establish, or have established, revolving loan programs for the purpose of providing loans to ultimate recipients for business purposes and community developments in a rural area.

There are no “responsiveness” or “threshold” eligibility criteria for these loans. However, not more than one loan will be approved by the Agency for an intermediary in any single fiscal year unless the additional request is from this program’s set-aside funding.

*5. Completeness Eligibility.*

Applications will not be considered for funding if they do not provide enough information to determine eligibility, are not suitable for evaluation or are missing required elements as stated in 7 CFR § 4274.340.

**D. Application and Submission Information**

*1. Address to Request Application Package.*

For further information, entities wishing to apply for assistance should contact the USDA Rural Development State Office where they are located, provided in the ADDRESSES section of this notice, to obtain copies of the application package. Applicants are also encouraged to contact their respective Rural Development State office for an email contact to submit an electronic application prior to the submission deadline date(s). Please note that applicants may locate the downloadable application package for this program by the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number, which is 10.767.

All applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number which can be obtained at no cost via a toll-free request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. In compliance with 2 CFR part 200, all applicants for direct loans must also be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) prior to submitting an application. Applicants may register for the SAM at <http://www.sam.gov>.

*2. Content and Form of Submission.*

An application must contain all the required elements and each selection priority criterion outlined in 7 CFR 4274.343 must be addressed in the application. An original copy of the application must be filed with a Rural Development State Office for the state where the Intermediary is located.

The applicant documentation and forms needed for a complete application are located in 7 CFR § 4274.340. There are no specific formats or limitations on the number of pages required for an application narrative, and applicants may request any Agency forms and addresses from the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice. Any form that requires an original signature, but is signed electronically in the application submission, must be signed in ink by the authorized person prior to the disbursement of funds.

3. *Submission Dates and Times.*

Applications must be received by the specified USDA Rural Development State Office by the dates and times as indicated above to compete for available funds in a fiscal quarter. If the due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday or federal holiday, the application is due the next business day. The Agency will determine the application receipt date based on the actual date an application is received electronically, in person, or when a paper application is postmarked.

**E. Application Review Information**

1. *Criteria.*

All eligible and complete applications will be evaluated and scored based on the selection criteria and weights contained in 7 CFR § 4274.341(b). Failure to address any of the application criteria by the application deadline will result in the application being determined ineligible, and the application will not be considered for funding.

2. *Review and Selection Process.*

The Rural Development State Offices will review applications to determine if



they are eligible for assistance based on the requirements contained in 7 CFR part 4274, subpart D. If determined eligible, your application will be submitted to the National Office for funding competition with all eligible applications received by the quarterly application deadline. The Agency Administrator reserves the right to award up to 10 discretionary points with justification under 7 CFR 4274.341(b)(10).

In order to distribute funds among the greatest number of projects possible, State application submissions will be reviewed, organized and ranked in order from highest to lowest and funded up to the maximum funding available.

## **F. Federal Award Administration Information**

### *1. Federal Award Notices.*

Successful applicants will receive notification for funding from the USDA Rural Development State Office. Applicants must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations before the loan award will be obligated. An eligible application competing for regular IRP funds, but not selected, will be reconsidered in three subsequent quarterly funding competitions, for a total of four competitions, provided the application and eligibility requirements have not changed. After competing in four quarterly competitions, any unsuccessful applicant for regular funds will receive written notification indicating that their application will no longer be considered for funding. Applicants competing for set-aside funding have only one application period per fiscal year. Unsuccessful applicants for set-aside funding will receive written notification indicating that their application was not successful. An unsuccessful applicant for set-aside funding may elect, in writing, to submit their project for IRP regular fund competitions commencing with the next quarterly application period.

### *2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.*

Additional requirements that apply to intermediaries selected for this Program can be found in 7 CFR part 4274, subpart D. All successful applicants will be notified by

letter which will include a Letter of Conditions, and a Letter of Intent to Meet Conditions, which are not approval determinations. The loan will be considered approved when all conditions in the Letter of Conditions have been met and the Agency obligates the funding for the Project.

In addition, all recipients of Federal financial assistance are required to report information about first-tier sub-awards and executive compensation (see 2 CFR part 170). You will be required to have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Pub. L. 109-282) reporting requirements (see 2 CFR 170.200(b), unless you are exempt under 2 CFR 170.110(b)).

Intermediaries must collect and maintain data provided by Ultimate Recipients on race, sex, and national origin and also ensure that Ultimate Recipients collect and maintain this data. Race and ethnicity data will be collected in accordance with OMB Federal Register notice, “Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity” (62 FR 58782), October 30, 1997. Sex data will be collected in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. These items should not be submitted with the application but should be available upon request by the Agency.

The applicant and the Ultimate Recipients must comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Executive Order 12250, Executive Order 13166 Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and 7 CFR part 1901, subpart E.

## **G. Other Information**

### **Paperwork Reduction Act**

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the information

collection requirement contained in this notice is approved by OMB under OMB Control Number 0570-0021.

### **Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act**

All applicants, in accordance with 2 CFR part 25, must have a DUNS number, which can be obtained at no cost via a toll-free request line at (866) 705-5711 or online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. In compliance with 2 CFR part 200, all applicants for direct loans must also be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) prior to submitting an application. Applicants may register for the SAM at <http://www.sam.gov>. All recipients of Federal financial assistance are required to report information about first-tier sub-awards and executive total compensation in accordance with 2 CFR part 170.

### **Nondiscrimination Statement**

In accordance with Federal civil rights laws and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Mission Areas, agencies, staff offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain

program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible Mission Area, agency, or staff office; the USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY); or the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, *USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form*, which can be obtained online at <https://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/ad-3027>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

(2) Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

(3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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